

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the subject application. Claims 1, 5, 13, 16, and 19 have been amended and claims 2, 7, 10, 11, and 22-24 have been canceled. In view of the claim amendments and the remarks set forth below, all pending claims are currently in condition for allowance.

1. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 7, 11, and 23 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Applicant appreciates the indication of allowability.

2. Prior Art 35 U.S.C. §102 Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-2, 5-6, 10, 13, 15 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,198,447 to Sauer (hereinafter "Sauer"). Although Applicant does not agree with the merits of this rejection, in order to facilitate prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 7, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Claim 7 has been canceled. Likewise, Applicant has amended independent claim 13 to include the elements of claim 23, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Claim 23 has been canceled. All remaining amendments were made in the interests of clarity and in order to place the remaining claims in accordance with newly amended claim 1 and claim 13. As a result, all of the rejections raised by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) are rendered moot.

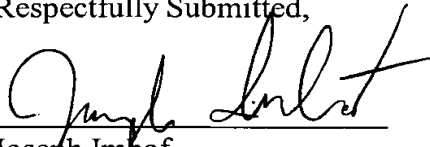
3. Prior Art 35 U.S.C. §103 Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 3-4, 8-9, and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sauer in view of Essex advertisement of 2/27/2002 (hereinafter "Essex"). Respectfully, Applicant asserts that he does not necessarily acknowledge that Essex is prior art to the claimed invention, and hereby reserve the right to swear behind this reference. For the purposes of this reply, however, this point is moot since the claims as amended patentably distinguish over this reference. All of the claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are dependent from either claim 1 or claim 13, and thus are allowable for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to those claims.

4. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103 should be withdrawn. Independent claim 1, and all claims depending therefrom, and independent claim 13, and all claims depending therefrom, are currently in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and issuance of the subject application. If any issues remain that preclude issuance of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joseph Imhof
Reg. No. 41,863
Synnestvedt & Lechner
2600 Aramark Tower
1101 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 923-4466 phone
(215) 923-2189 fax

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